



COVID-19

Questions and Answers

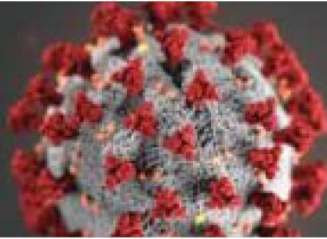
**Answers to some of the most frequently asked questions:
Last Update: June 30, 5 p.m.**

Q-1. What is the Mississippi Department of Corrections doing to lessen the spread of COVID-19 among staff and inmates?

A. The MDOC has provided masks to all inmates and staff. Cleaning and disinfection measures are increased. Good hygiene practices, such as frequent hand washing, are reinforced. Gloves and additional soap are provided. Hand sanitizer is made available in strategic locations for both staff and inmates' use. Social distancing should be practiced as much as possible for both staff and inmates. Staff and inmates are recommended to follow health guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention.

Inmates can access medical staff using the sick call system. A face-to-face triage is completed within 24 hours of submission of the sick call request. Medical staff are seeing inmates with acute respiratory symptoms in a timely manner. Symptomatic inmates with fever are tested according to Mississippi State Department of Health and CDC guidelines. They will be quarantined, according to MSDH and CDC guidelines. Affected patients may be transferred to a community hospital, if symptoms become severe.

Security staff and non-security staff are screened daily. Staff found to have a fever (temperature of 100.4 or above) will not be allowed to report to work that day and will be advised to contact their doctor's office. Staff members who are feeling ill before reporting for duty are urged to stay home and see their physician, if needed. A screening tool questionnaire also is in place for staff arriving at a correctional facility. The questions include asking about recent travel from an affected country and possible exposure to someone who has suspected or confirmed COVID-19 disease.



Questions and Answers

Q-2. What are the latest number of confirmed cases in the inmate population?

A. There are 71 positive cases in the inmate population, based on the most recent data. Where the cases are can be found at <https://www.mdoc.ms.gov/Documents/Inmates%20cases%20chart.pdf>

Q-3. What happens in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19 in an MDOC facility?

A. The MDOC has extensive protocols in place to address scenarios when illness is present. These include immediate quarantine and treatment at facility infirmaries, designated areas or outside hospitals as necessary. Sterilization of all surfaces also is included. Inmates in close proximity to any inmate testing positive are quarantined and receive enhanced screening. Quarantined inmates are monitored daily for symptoms of the coronavirus.

Q-4. In addition to the positive inmate cases, how many inmates have tested negative and how many tests are pending?

A. There have been 126 inmates to test negative, based on the latest report. Additionally, 16 tests are pending.

Q-5. How many MDOC employees have tested positive?

A. The department has 42 positive cases among staff, based on the most available information.

Q-6. How many other employees have been tested and what is the status of those tests?

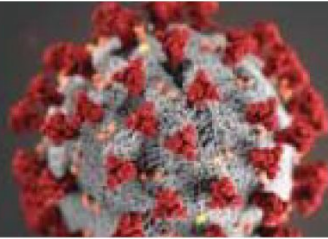
A. In addition to the positive cases, 133 negative tests have been reported and 17 tests are pending.

Q-7. When does MDOC test inmates for COVID-19?

A. The criteria for testing inmates are the same as for the general public. Testing priorities include having a fever of 100.4 or above and symptoms of an acute respiratory illness (cough or difficulty breathing). Inmates with fever and respiratory illness are tested for influenza. If the influenza tests are negative, then the inmate is tested for COVID-19. The inmate patient will remain isolated in the infirmary until the test result is received.

Q-8. Are inmates required to pay medical co-pay during the COVID-19 pandemic?

A. No. Co-pay for any inmate sick call related to influenza or COVID-19 is waived.



Questions and Answers

Q-9. How long will the restrictions on visitation for family, friends, and volunteers continue?

A. A date for lifting restrictions has not been determined. Resuming visitation is based on current updates of the COVID-19 impact.

Q-10. If I usually travel from out of state to Mississippi to visit an inmate, how can I find out the status of the visitation suspension before I leave?

A. Call the facility first. Telephone numbers are listed on the MDOC website (www.mdod.ms.gov) or contact the Office of Communications at MDOCOfficeofCommunications@mdoc.state.ms.us

Q-11. Are inmates allowed to meet with their attorneys?

A. Yes. All legal visits are permitted. The legal visit areas are sanitized after each visit.

Q-12. How can family and friends maintain contact with their incarcerated loved ones?

A. Inmates can still make telephone calls through the inmate phone system. The United States mail also is a good way to communicate with inmates.

Q-13. Can inmates travel on approved leave, such as to funerals or wakes?

A. No. Movement remains suspended.

Q-14. Are prisons on lockdown because of COVID-19?

A. No. Prisons are not on lockdown.

Q-15. What activities can inmates participate in during this time? Will activities, including educational and religious programs, continue?

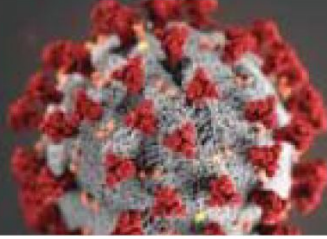
A. Programming remains suspended. However, inmates are free to participate in recreational activities while practicing social distancing.

Q-16. If an inmate is scheduled to be released, will the release occur?

A. Yes. All scheduled releases will occur as planned.

Q-17. Will inmates be considered for early release because of the coronavirus pandemic?

A. No. Inmates are being released through the standard release practice.



Questions and Answers

Q-18. Are inmate transfers or movement from county jails affected?

A. Yes. The department is resuming transfers in a limited, safe, and controlled manner. Inmates who have been classified and are ready to transfer from the South Mississippi Correctional Institution, Central Mississippi Correctional Facility, and Tallahatchie County Correctional Facility will be quarantined for a minimum of 14 days before being moved to other facilities. Inmates moved from the county jails to an MDOC facility will be handled in a similar manner. Routine screenings and temperature checks will be performed daily before each inmate leaves a facility. Not clearing the screening will result in a delay in that inmate's transfer and the protocol for a suspected COVID-19 case, including medical isolation and testing, will be followed.

Q-19. Are inmates allowed to resume working off grounds?

A. Yes, but not in all cases. Inmates, for example, in the Joint State County Work Program or with the Community Work Centers in Noxubee, Forrest, and Leflore counties have been permitted to return to work provided that all stakeholders remain asymptomatic and additional precautions are taken to protect the community, staff and inmates.

Q-20. Should people on community supervision, including probation/parole, continue reporting to supervising agents via email or phone?

A. Yes, but there have been adjustments. Limited office visits will resume in July. Agents will be calling individuals on their caseloads who are not required to report in person. Individuals who are not contacted by their agent must report in person beginning in July.

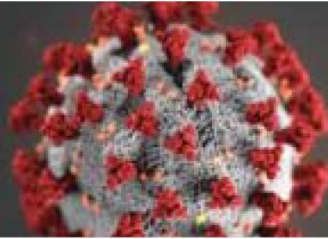
Q-21. What precautionary requirements are in place for face-to-face visits?

A. Agents and individuals reporting will be required to wear face masks and remain six feet apart for social distancing. High touch areas will be cleaned and disinfected among all necessary precautions. Individuals who are instructed to report in person should not come to the office if they are feeling ill. Those persons not feeling well should call their agent on the report day.

Q-22. What if an individual must report by phone?

Individuals who are not required to report in person may call any day between Wednesday, July 1, and Monday, July 20, The person who answers the phone will take the report. Office hours will be from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. Monday through Friday. Reports will be handled as they were in April, May, and June. Individuals must provide the person answering the phone with their name, MDOC number, address, and phone number. They will be asked additional questions related to employment and other issues specifically as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Individuals can also email their agent or use technology portals, such as Skype and FaceTime, to communicate. Individuals will be considered non-reporting if they fail to contact the MDOC.



Questions and Answers

Q-23. Is out-of-state travel permitted for individuals on supervision?

A. Permits are being granted on a case-by-case basis.

Q-24. What is the MDOC's current COVID-19 practice regarding individuals in the Interstate Compact program, which handles the transfers between the states of individuals under supervision?

A. Mississippi is only processing incoming transfers that are resident, resident family, and military. Approvals are only for probationers living in the receiving state at the time of sentencing and those with military affiliation.

For outgoing cases, go to interstatecompact.org for a list of state restrictions to see if an offender will be able to transfer to a particular state. The list changes frequently so you should check it often for the most current information.

For current information regarding the coronavirus, visit the following websites:

www.coronavirus.gov

www.cdc.gov/COVID19

<https://msdh.ms.gov>

**The Mississippi Coronavirus Hotline is available 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Monday-Friday
Call **877-978-6453****